

USDA Programs Help Sub-Saharan African Countries

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides assistance to African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) countries to help them boost economic growth, spur development, and reduce poverty. With 70 percent of Africa's population working in agriculture, USDA's programs aim to build up Africa's agricultural sector to increase local, regional, and global trade capacity to allow the region to benefit from its AGOA trade preferences.

What follows are stories of successes achieved by the African people with targeted USDA programs for specific needs. These programs are making an impact community by community, country by country, and creating a multiplier effect that will result in a more prosperous continent.



From left to right: Okubotin Nabena, Aniefi-okmckpong Okon, Jeriedayaro Uwheraka, Eric Sampou, and Clapton Ogolo, who were receiving aquaculture training through the Cochran Fellowship Program at Mississippi State University, 2009. (Photo by Lindsey Itle, USDA/FAS.)

USDA's **Cochran Fellowship Program** provides technical training to assist participants in developing the agricultural systems necessary to meet the food and fiber needs of their countries and strengthens trade linkages with the United States. This program has enabled alumni to make significant contributions to their countries. Here are some of their stories:

- Rasaq Oyeleke, a Nigerian Cochran Fellow, began selling cassava flour and palm oil to a U.S. firm after making many valu-

able U.S. business contacts while attending an agricultural trade policy formulation program in 2009.

- As a result of Cochran training in intellectual property rights in 2004, Dr. Ethel Monda from Kenya established the Intellectual Property Board at Kenyatta University where she currently serves as the board's director.

The **Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program** provides collaborative research training for leading scientists and policy makers from developing and middle income countries with an emphasis on female agricultural scientists. The stories of two African women follow:

- Linnet Serenge Gohole, a lecturer at Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya, shares the knowledge she gained as a Borlaug Fellow to



Kenyan Borlaug Fellows Godwin Macharia and Joseph Kinyoro Macharia, a plant breeder and plant pathologist, respectively, spent three months at the University of Minnesota working to create new stem-rust-resistant wheat varieties, 2006. (Photo by David Hansen, University of Minnesota.)

help Kenyan farmers address climate change. She has successfully introduced farmers to intercropping, high-yielding banana plants, and drought-resistant varieties of sweet potato, leading to foods with greater nutritional value and increased earnings for farmers.

- Mildred Osei Kwarteng, a development officer with Ghana's Ministry of Agriculture and Food in Kumasi, is helping farmers and rural Ghanaians address problems from overuse and misapplication of chemicals that degrade soil quality and contaminate drinking water. Ms. Kwarteng's Borlaug Fellowship included learning about the proper use of pesticides, better irrigation methods, and mining nutrients from the soil using natural methods. By passing this information on to Ghanaian farmers, Ms. Kwarteng is helping them reduce crop production costs, boost yields, and increase their earnings.

The **Faculty Exchange Program** brings instructors from agricultural institutes of higher learning to the United States for four to five months to increase their technical knowledge and ability to teach agricultural science.

- After four Nigerian professors attended training in sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues under this program, they held a one-week workshop for 19 public and private sector individuals in Zaria, Nigeria, in April 2010. Training included U.S. and Nigerian export procedures, pest risk assessments, post-harvest treatment, pesticide regulations, and food safety. Knowledge of international trade regulations related to SPS issues is limited in Nigeria and hinders the development of acceptable horticultural crop exports to the world market. Workshops and classes on SPS and trade issues taught by these Nigerian professors will help educate both the public and the next generation of students.

The **Scientific Cooperation Research Program** helps U.S. scientists enter into long-term research projects with partners in other countries in areas such as animal and plant diseases and pests, food safety, and emerging technologies. The program is currently funding two projects in AGOA countries.

- University of Washington scientists are conducting joint research with three East African counterparts to identify which plants in the sweet potato family are best suited for removing toxins from the soil. This project has helped scientists from Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya successfully collect more than 60 sweet potato cultivars and test systems for screening the varieties while avoiding exposure to toxins.
- In Nigeria, government and private sector officials received training to improve large-scale commodity storage and handling practices. The training will help reduce post-harvest loss, currently between 20 and 30 percent, improve the availability of locally produced cereals, and lessen food insecurity.

Food Assistance. USDA provides food assistance to AGOA countries through two programs—the **Food for Progress (FFPr)** and the **McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern-Dole) Programs**.

Under **FFPr**, USDA works with private voluntary organizations and foreign governments to implement agricultural development activities. The following projects have demonstrated sustainability and provided new opportunities to women and rural communities:

- In 2008, a group of Senegalese women entrepreneurs were recognized by the President of their country for making rice-based couscous, flour, juices, jams, and marmalades competitive in Podor District's local markets. The women's group might not have achieved this success without the help of Counterpart International and FFPr.



Farmers deliver milk to the Eastern Dairies milk collection center. (Photo by Land O'Lakes/ Uganda.)

In 2004, USDA donated 10,500 metric tons of milled U.S. rice to Counterpart, which sold the rice on the Senegalese market and used the proceeds to provide Senegalese farmers, especially women, in the Podor District with agricultural training, access to improved seed varieties, tools, and micro-credits.

- In Uganda, a company comprised of 11 local dairy cooperatives quadrupled its sales in one year with assistance from Land O'Lakes (LOL) under a 2005 FFPr grant donating 11,100 tons of U.S. hard red winter wheat. The wheat was sold in Uganda and the funds were used to partly pay for the cooperatives to install a 2,000-liter milk cooler. With guidance from LOL, the cooperatives reinvested their profits and member contributions to purchase more assets, upgrade their equipment, and open two new sales outlets that sell more than 15,000 liters of milk per month. As a result, household incomes have grown by more than 50 percent and the cooperatives' average monthly profits are more than \$3,000.

The **McGovern-Dole Program** helps promote education, child development, nutrition, and food security in low-income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education. The program provides donations of U.S. agricultural products, as well as financial and technical assistance, for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects. Some program successes include the following:



School meals allow children to focus on school work rather than where their next meal will come from. (Photo by Counterpart International.)

- In Senegal, children in 112 primary schools and 21 pre-schools and mothers and infants in 58 maternal and child health nutrition centers receive a daily meal and plus rations due to a Counterpart International project funded by the McGovern-Dole Program. In 2007, USDA donated more than 9,500 tons of soybean oil, vegetable oil, textured soy protein, and barley valued at more than \$6 million. Counterpart sold the U.S. commodities in Senegal and used the proceeds to provide a daily lunch to 20,000 children. After nearly three years of operation, this school feeding program has achieved a large measure of sustainability. The national and local governments have allocated more than \$2 million to school feeding activities, nearly 450 teachers and Parent-Teacher Association members have been trained in managing school feeding activities, and more than 22 villages are implementing school garden activities.

General information about FAS programs, resources, and services is available on the Internet at the FAS home page: <http://www.fas.usda.gov>

